STRIKING ADDRESS OF CHAS. FRANCIS ADAMS ON LEE

(Continued from Fourth Page.)

the soil of his native State, or leading his army into the enemy's country, he was humane, self-restrained and strictly observant of the most advanced rules of civilized warfare. He respected the non-combatant; nor did he ever permit the wanton destruction of private property. His famous Chambersburg order was a model which any invading general would do well to make his own; and I repeat now what I have heretofore had occasion to say, "I doubt if a hostile force of an equal size ever advanced into an enemy's country, or fell back from it in retreat, leaving behind less cause of hate and bitterness than did the Army of Northern Virginia in that memorable campaign which culminated at Gettysburg."

And yet that Gettysburg campaign is an episode in Lee's military career which I am loth wholly to pass over; for the views I entertain of it are not in all respects those generally held. So far as Lee's general plan of campaign, and the movement which culminated in the battle of Gettysburg, were concerned, in war, be it always and ever remembered, a leader must take some chances, and mistakes will occur; but the mistakes are rarely, if ever, all on one side.

They tend to counterbalance each other; and, commanders and commanded being at all equal, not unseldom it is the balance of misconceptions, shortcomings, miscarriages, and the generally unforseen and indeed unforeseeable, which tips the scale to victory or defeat. I have said that I proposed to avoid comparisons; at best such are invidious, and, under present circumstances, might from me be considered as doubtful in matter of taste. I think, however, some things too obvious to admit of denial; or, consequently, to suggest comparison. About every crisp military aphorism is as matter of course attributed to Napoleon; and so Napoleon is alleged first to have remarked that—"In war, men are nothing; a man is everything." And, as formerly a soldier of the Army of the Potomac, I now stand appalled at the risk I unconsciously ran anterior to July, 1863, when confronting the Army of Northern Virginia, commanded as it then was and as we were. The situation was in fact as bad with us in the Army of the Potomac as it was with the Confederates in the Southwest. The unfortunate Pemberton there was simply not in the same class as Grant and Sherman, to whom he found himself opposed. Results there followed accordingly. So, in Virginia, Lee and Jackson made an extraordinary, a most exceptional combination.

They outclassed McClellan and Burnside, Pope and Hooker; outclassed them sometimes terribly, sometimes ludicrously, always hopelessly; and results in that case also followed accordingly. That we were not utterly destroyed constitutes a flat and final refutal of the truth of Napoleon's aphorism. If we did not realize the facts of the situation in this respect, our opponents did. Let me quote the words of one of them: "There was, however, one point of great interest in (the rapid succession of the Federal commanders), and that was our amazement that an army could maintain even so much as its organization under the depressing strain of those successive appointments and removals of its commanding general. And to-day (1903) I, for one, regard the fact that it did preserve its cohesion and its fighting power under, and in spite of, such experiences, as furnishing impressive demonstration of the high character and intense loyalty of our historic foe, the Federal Army of the Potomac."

Action at Gettysburg Is Fully Justified.

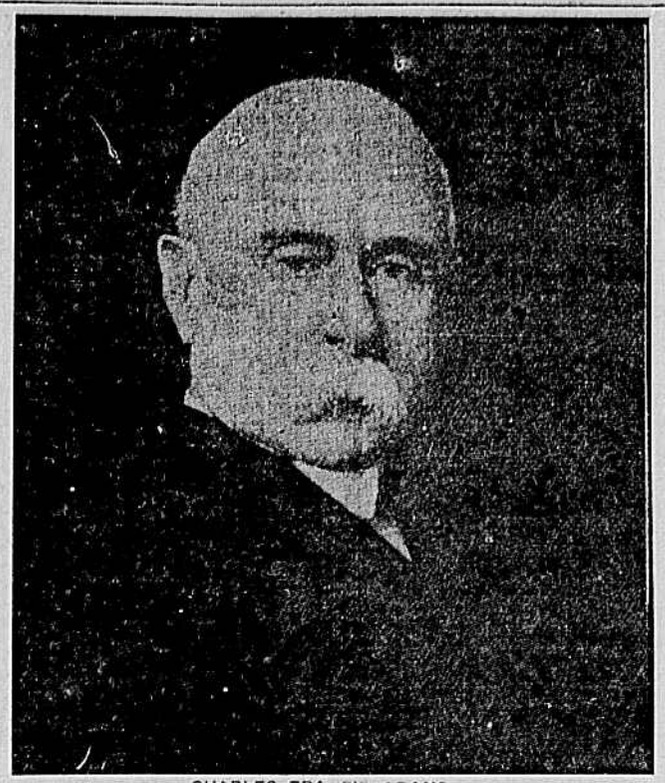
But, while Lee on any fair weighing of chances stands, in my judgment, more than justified both in his conception of the Gettysburg campaign and in every material strategic move made in it, he none the less fundamentally misconceived the situation, with consequences which should have been fatal both to him and to his command. Frederick did the same at Kunersdorf; Napoleon at Waterloo. In the first place, Lee had at that time supreme confidence in his command; and he had grounds for it. As he himself then wrote—"There never were such men in an army before. They will go anywhere and do anything, if properly led." And, for myself, I do not think the estimate thus expressed was exaggerated; speaking deliberately, having faced some portions of the Army of Northern Virginia at the time, and having since reflected much on the occurrences of that momentous period, I do not believe that any more formidable or better organized and animated force was ever set in motion than that which Lee led across the Potomac in the early summer of 1863.

It was essentially an army of fighters,—men who, individually or in the mass, could be depended on for any feat of arms in the power of mere mortals to accomplish. They would blanch at no danger. This Lee from experience knew. He had tested them; they had full confidence in him. He also thought he knew his opponent; and here, too, his recent experience justified him.

The disasters which had befallen the Confederates in the Southwest in the spring and early summer of 1863 had to find compensation in the East. The exigencies of warfare necessitated it. Some risk must be incurred. So Lee determined to strike at his opponent's heart. He had what he believed to be the better weapon; and he had reason for considering himself incomparably the superior swordsman. He was; of that he had at Chancellorsville satisfied himself and the world. Then came the rapid, aggressive move; and the long, desperately contested struggle at Gettysburg, culminating in that historic charge of Pickett's Virginia division. Paradoxical as it may sound, in view of the result, that charge—what those men did—justified Lee. True, those who made the charge did not accomplish the impossible; but towards it they did all that mortal men could do. But it is urged that Lee should have recognized the impossible when face to face confronted by it, and not have directed brave men to lay down their lives in the vain effort to do it. That is true; and as Lee is said to have once remarked in another connection, "Even as poor a soldier as I am can generally discover mistakes after it is all over." After Gettysburg was over, like Frederick at Kunersdorf and Napoleon at Waterloo, Lee doubtless discovered his mistake. It was a very simple one: He undervalued his opponent.

The temper of his own weapon he knew; he made no mistake there. His mistake lay in his estimate of his antagonist: but that estimate again was based on his own recent experience, though in other fields.

It is a dangerous error in aggressive warfare to undervalue one's opponent; but again I am warned to be brief. On this topic, did time permit, I should have much here to say. As it is, I again hurry on, leaving those interested to consult the printed page. Narrowly escaping destruction at Gettysburg, my next contention is that Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia never sustained defeat. Finally, it is true, succumbing to exhaustion, to the end they were not overthrown in fight. And here I approach a large topic, but one closely interwoven with Lee's military career; in fact, as I see it, the explanation of what finally occurred. What then was it that brought about the collapse of the Army of Northern Virginia, and the consequent downfall of the Confederacy? The literature of the War of Secession now contributes a library in itself. Especially is this true of it in its military aspect. The shelves are crowded with memoirs and biographies of its generals, the stories of its campaigns, the records and achievements of its armies, its army corps, and its regiments. Yet I make bold to say that no well and philosophically considered narrative of the struggle has yet appeared; nor has any satisfactory or comprehensive explanation been given of its extraordinary and unanticipated outcome. Let me briefly set it forth as I see it; only by so doing can I explain what I mean.



CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS.
Distinguished publicist, and one of the first Northern men to speak to Southern audience on R. E. Lee.

South's Position at Beginning of the War.

Tersely put, dealing only with outlines, the Southern community in 1861 precipitated a conflict on the slavery issue, in implicit reliance on its own warlike capacity and resources, the extent and very defensible character of its territory, and, above all, on its complete control of cotton as the great staple textile fabric of modern civilization. That the seceding States fully believed in the justice of their cause, and confidently appealed to it, I do not question, much less deny. For present purposes let this be conceded in full. But, historically, it is equally clear that to vindicate the right, next to their own manhood and determination, they relied in all possible confidence on their apparently absolute control of one commercial staple.

In the struggle which ensued the Confederacy had on land an ample force of men; they swarmed to the standards; and no better or more reliable material was ever gathered together. Well and skilfully marshaled, the Confederate soldier did on the march and in battle all that needed to be done. Nor were the two sides unequally matched, so far as the land arrays were concerned.

As Lee with his instinctive military sense put it even in the closing stages of the struggle—"The proportion of experienced troops is larger in our army than in that of the enemy, while his numbers exceeded our own." And in warfare experience, combined with an advantageous defensive, counts for a great deal. This was so throughout the conflict; and yet the Confederate cause sank in failure. It did so to the complete surprise of a bewildered world; for, in Europe, the ultimate success of the South was accepted as a foregone conclusion. To such an extent was this the case that the wisest and most far-seeing of English public men did not hesitate to stake their reputation for foresight upon it as a result. How was the wholly unexpected actual outcome brought about? The simple answer is: The Confederacy collapsed from inanition. Suffering such occasional reverses and defeats as are incidental to all warfare, it was never crushed in battle or on the field, until its strength was sapped away by want of food. It died of exhaustion—starved and gasping!

Take a living organism, whatever it may be, place it in a vessel hermetically sealed, and attach to that vessel an air pump. You know what follows. It is needless to describe it. No matter how strong or fierce or self-confident it may be, the victim dies; growing weaker by degrees, it finally collapses. That was the exact condition and fate of the Confederacy.

What had been confidently pronounced impossible was done. The Confederacy was sealed up within itself by the blockade, and the complete exclusion of cotton from the manufacturing centres of Europe did not cause revolution there, nor compel intervention here. Man's foresight once more came to grief. As usual, it was the unexpected which occurred.

Two Decisive Defeats of the Confederacy.

Thus the two decisive defeats of the Confederacy, those which really brought about its downfall and compelled Lee to lay down his arms, were inflicted not before Vicksburg, nor yet in Virginia, not in the field at all; they were sustained, the one, almost by default, on the ocean; the other, most fatal of all, after sharpest struggle in Lancashire. The story of that Lancashire cotton famine of 1861 to 1864 has never been adequately told in connection with our Civil War. Simply ignored by the standard historians, it was yet the Confederacy's fiercest fight, and its most decisive as well as most far-reaching defeat. A momentous conflict, the supremacy of the Union on the ocean, hung on its issue, and upon that supremacy depended every considerable land operation; the retention by the Confederacy of New Orleans, and the consequent control of the Mississippi; Sherman's march to the sea; the movement through the Carolinas; the operations before Petersburg; generally, the maintenance of the Confederate armies in the field.

It is, in fact, no exaggeration to assert that both the conception and the carrying out of every large Union operation of the war without a single exception hinged and depended on complete national maritime supremacy. It is equally indisputable that the struggle in Lancashire was decisive of that supremacy. As Lee himself admitted in the death agony of the Confederacy, he had never believed it could in the long run make good its independence "unless Foreign Powers should, directly or indirectly, assist" it in so doing. Thus, strange as it sounds, it follows as a logical consequence that Lee and his Army of Northern Virginia were first reduced to inanition, and finally compelled to succumb, as the result of events on the other side of the Atlantic, largely stimulated by a moral impulse over which they could exert no control. The great and loudly trumpeted cotton campaign of the Confederacy was its most signal failure; and that failure was decisive of the war.

Foreign intervention being thus witheld, and the control of the sea by the Union made absolute, the blockade was gradually perfected. The fateful process then went steadily on. Armies might be resisted in the field; the working of the air pump could not be stopped; and, day and night, season after season, the air pump worked. So the atmosphere of the Confederacy became more and more attenuated, respiration sensibly harder. Air-hole on air-hole was closed. First New Orleans fell; then Vicksburg, and the Mississippi flowed free; next Sherman, securely counting on the control of the sea as a base of new operations on land, penetrated the vitals of the Confederacy; then, relying still on maritime co-operation, he pursued his almost unopposed way through the Carolinas; while Grant, with his base secure upon the James and Fortress Monroe, beleaguered Richmond. Lee with his Army of Northern Virginia calmly but watchfully and resolutely confronted him. The Confederate lines were long and thin, guarded by poorly clad and half-fed men. But, veterans, they held their assailants firmly at bay.

As Lee, however, fully realized, it was only a question of time. The working of the air pump was beyond his sphere either of influence or operations. Nothing could stop it.

As early as the close of 1862 Lee wrote of his men: "Thousands are barefooted, a greater number partially shod, and nearly all without overcoats, blankets or warm clothing." And later, in the dead of winter, referring to the elementary necessities of any successful warfare, he said: "The supply, by running the blockade, has become so precarious that I think we should turn our attention to our own resources, . . . as a further dependence upon those from abroad can result in nothing but increase of suffering and want." The conclusion here drawn, while necessary, was extremely suggestive. "Our own resources!" The Confederacy had always prided itself on being a purely agricultural community. With institutions patriarchal in character, it had looked upon the people of the North as its agents and factors, and those of Europe as its skilled workmen and artisans; and now that community, shut up within its own limits, under conditions of warfare active and severe, had only itself to rely upon for a supply of everything its defenders needed, from munitions to shoes, from blankets to medicines, and even soap. Viewed in a half century's perspective, the situation was simply and manifestly impossible of continuance. To it there could be but one outcome; and when at last, on the 16th of January, 1865, the telegraph announced the fall of Fort Fisher, the Confederacy felt itself hermetically sealed. Wilmington, its last breathing hole, was closed. Still, not the less for that, the air pump kept on in its deadly, silent work.

Lee and His Men Stood Every Test of Adversity.

Three months later the long-delayed inevitable occurred. The collapse came. That under such conditions it should have been so long in coming is now the only legitimate cause of surprise. That adversity is the test of man is a commonplace; that Lee and his Army of Northern Virginia were during the long, dragging winter of 1864-'5 most direfully subjected to that test need not here be said, any more than it is needful to say that they bore the test manfully. But the handwriting was on the wall; the men were taxed beyond the limits of human endurance. And Lee knew it. "Yesterday, the most inclement day of the winter," he reported on February 8, 1865, the right wing of his army "had to be retained in line of battle, having been in the same condition the two previous days and nights. . . . Under these circumstances, heightened by assaults and fire of the enemy, some of the men had been without meat for three days, and all were suffering from reduced rations and scant clothing, exposed to battle, cold, hail and sleet. . . . The physical strength of the men, if their courage survives, must fail under this treatment."

If it was so with the men, with the animals it was even worse. "Our cavalry," he added, "has to be dispersed for want of forage." Even thus Lee's army faced an opponent vastly superior in numbers, whose ranks were being constantly replenished; a force armed, clothed, equipped, fed and sheltered as no similar force in the world's history had ever been bfore. I state only indisputable facts. Lee proved equal to even this occasion. Bearing a bold, confident front, he was serene and outwardly calm; alert, resourceful, formidable to the last, individually he showed no sign of weakness, not even occasional petulance. Inspired by his example, the whole South seemed to lean up against him in implicit, loving reliance. It was a superlative tribute to character. Finally, when in April the summons to conflict came, the Army of Northern Virginia, the single remaining considerable organized force of the Confederacy, seemed to stagger to its feet, and, gaunt and grim, shivering with cold and emaciated with hunger, worn down by hard, unceasing attrition, it faced its enemy, formidable still. As I have since studied that situation, listened to the accounts of Confederate officers active in the closing movements, and read the letters written me by those of the rank and file, it has seemed as if Lee's command then cohered and moved by mere force of habit. Those composing it failed to realize the utter hopelessness of the situation—the disparity of the conflict. I am sure Jefferson Davis failed to realize it; so, I think, in less degree, did Lee.

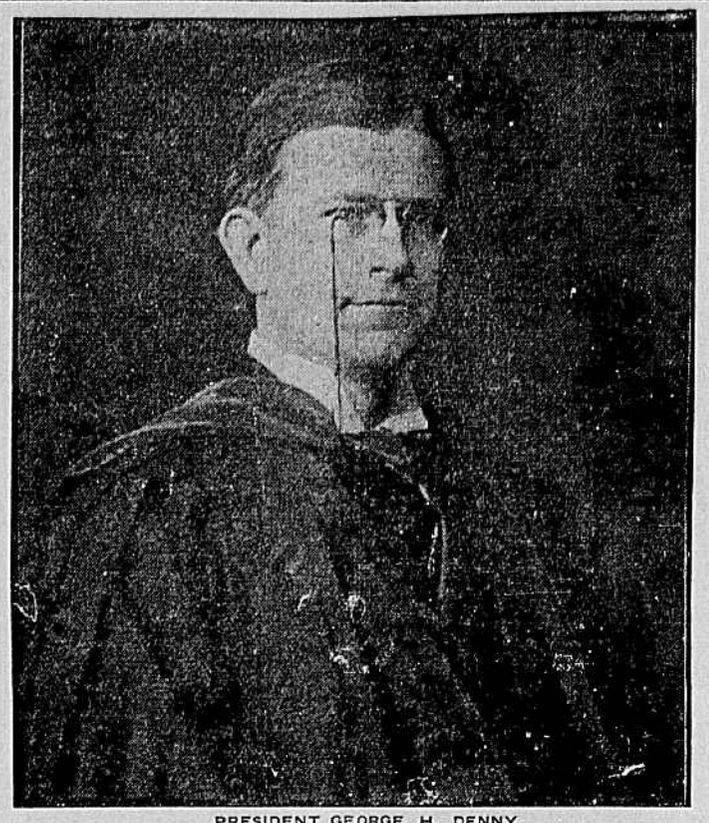
They talked, for instance, of recruits and of a levy in mass; Lee counselled the arming of the slaves; and when, after Lee had surrendered, Davis on the 10th of April, 1865, held his last war conference at Greensboro, he was still confident he would in a few weeks have another army in the field, and did not hestitate to express his faith that "we can whip the enemy yet, if our people will turn out." I have often pondered over what Davis had in mind when he ventured this opinion; or what led Lee to advocate the enlistment of negroes. Both were soldiers; and, besides being great in his profession, Lee was more familiar than any other man alive with actual conditions then existing in the Confederate camps. Both Davis and Lee, therefore, must have known that, in those final stages of the conflict, if the stamp of a foot upon the ground would have brought a million men into the field, the cause of the Confederacy would thereby have been in no wise strengthened; on the contrary, what was already bad would have been made much worse. For, to be effective in warfare, men must be fed and clothed and armed. Organized in commands, they must have rations as well as ammunition, commissary and quartermaster trains, artillery horses and forage.

In the closing month of the Civil War, both Lee and Davis knew perfectly well that they could not arm, nor feed, nor clothe, nor transport the forces already in the field; they were themselves without money, and the soldiers most inadequately supplied with arms, clothing, quartermaster or medical supplies, commissariat or ammunition. Notoriously, those then on the muster-rolls were going home, or deserting to the enemy, as the one alternative to death from privation—hunger and cold. If then, a million, or even only a poor hundred thousand, fresh recruits had in answer to the summons swarmed to the lines around Richmond, how would it have bettered the situation? An organized army is a mighty consumer of food and material; and food and material have to be served out to it every day. It must be fed as regularly as the sun rises and sets. And the organized resources of the Confederacy were exhausted; its granaries—Georgia and the Valley of the Shenandoah—were notoriously devasted and desolate; its lines of communication and supply were cut, or in the hands of the invader.

Realizing this, when the time was ripe, Lee rose to the full heighth of the great occasion. The value of character made itself felt. The service Lee now rendered to the common country, the obligation under which he placed us, whether of the North or South, has not, I think, been always appreciated; and to overstate it would be difficult. Again to put on record my estimate of it brings me here to-day.

The lead that day given by Lee proved decisive of the course to be pursued by his fellows with arms in their hands. At first, and for a brief space, there was in the Confederate councils much diversity of opinion as to what should or could be done. Calm and dignified in presence of overwhelming disaster, the voice of Jefferson Davis was that of Milton's "scepter'd king"— "My sentence is for open war!" Lee was not there; none the less, Lee, absent, prevailed over Davis. The sober second thought satisfied all, but the most extreme that what he had done they best might do. Thus the die was cast. And now, forty years and more after the event, it is appalling to reflect what in all human probability would have resulted had the choice then been other than it was—had Lee's personality and character not intervened. The struggle had lasted four full years; the assassination of Lincoln was as oil on the Union fire. With a million men, inured to war, on the national muster rolls, men impatient of further resistance, accustomed to license and now educated up to a belief that war was Hell, and that the best way to bring it to a close was to intensify Hell—with such a force as this to reckon with, made more reckless in brutality by the assassin's senseless shot, the Confederacy need have looked for no consideration, no mercy.

Visited by the bosom of destruction, it would have been harried out of existence. Fire and sword sweeping over it, what the sword spared the fire would have consumed. Whether such an outcome of a prolonged conflict—what was recently witnessed in South Africa—would in its result have been more morally injurious to the North than it would have been physically destructive to the South, is not now to be considered. It would, however, assuredly have come about.



PRESIDENT GEORGE H. DENNY.
Dr. Denny succeeded General G. W. C. Lee as president of Washington and Lee University, and was yesterday host of Mr. Adams.

Lee's Very Surrender Saved His Country.

From that crown of sorrows Lee saved the common country. He was the one man in the Confederacy who could exercise decisive influence. It was the night of the 8th of April, lacking ten days only of exactly four full years, years very full for us who lived through them, since that not dissimilar night when Lee had paced the floor at Arlington, communing with himself over the fateful issue, a decision on which was then forced upon him. A decision of even greater import was now to be reached, and reached by him. A commander of the usual cast would under such circumstances have sought advice, perhaps support; at least, a divided responsibility. Even though himself by nature and habit a masterful man and one occustomed to direct, he would have called a council, and harkened to those composing it. This Lee did not do.

A singularly self-poised man, he sought no external aid. Sitting before his bivouac fire at Appomattox he, reviewed the situation. Doing so, as before at Arlington, he reached his own conclusion. That conclusion he himself at the time expressed in words, brief, indeed, but vibrating with moral triumph: "The question is, is it right to surrender this army? If it is right, then I will take all the responsibility." The conclusion reached at Arlington in the April night of 1861 to some seems to have been wrong, inexcusable even; all concur in that reached before the Appomattox camp-fire in the April vigils of 1865. He then a second time decided, and he decided right.

His work was done; but from failure he plucked triumph. Thenceforth Lee wore defeat as it were a laurel crown. A few days later a small group of horsemen appeared in the morning hours on the further side of the Richmond pontoons across the James. By some strange intuition it became known that General Lee was of the party, and, silent and uncovered, a crowd—Virginians all—gathered along the route the horsemen would take. There was no excitement, no hurrahing; but as the great chief passed, a deep, loving murmur, greater than these, rose from the very hearts of the crowd.

Taking off his hat, and simply bowing his head, the man great in adversity passed silently to his own door; it closed upon him; and his people had seen him for the last time in his battle harness."

From the day that he affixed his signature to the terms of surrender submitted to him by Grant at Appomattox to the day when he drew a dying breath at Lexington, Lee's subsequent course was consistent. In his case there was no vacillation, no regretful glances backward thrown. He counselled with a wisdom not less profound because unconscious; and what he said evinced that underlying common sense which in politics avails more than genius.

Five years of life and active usefulness yet remained to General Lee—years in my juygment most creditable to himself, the most useful to his country of his whole life; for, during them, he set to Virginia and his own people a high example—an example of lofty character and simple bearing. Uttering no complaints, entering into no controversies, he was as one in suffering all, that suffers nothing. His blood and judgment were well commingled; and so it fell out that he accepted fortune's buffets and rewards with equal thanks. His record and appearance during those final years are pleasant to dwell upon, for they reflect honor on our American manhood.

Turning his face courageously to the future, he uttered no word of repining over the past. Yet, like the noble Moor, his occupation also was gone—

"The royal banner, and all quality,
Pride, pomp and circumstance of glorious war;"

But with Lee this did not imply

"Farewell the tranquil mind! farewell content!"

Far from it; for as the gates closed on the old occupation, they opened on a new. And it was an occupation through which he gave to his country, North and South, a priceless gift.

His Parting Years Will Bear Closest Scrutiny.

Speaking advisedly and on full reflection, I say that of all great characters of the Civil War, and it was productive of many whose names and deeds posterity will long bear in recollection, there was not one who passed away in the serene atmosphere and with the gracious bearing of Lee. From beginning to end those parting years of his will bear closest scrutiny. There was about them nothing venal, nothing querulous, nothing in any way sordid or disappointing. In his case there was no anti-climax; for those closing years were dignified, patient, useful, commanded respect. It is pleasant to catch glimpses of the erstwhile commander in that quiet Virginia life. There is in the picture something altogether human—intensely sympathetic. "Traveller," he would write, "is my only companion; I may also say my pleasure. He and I, whenever practicable, wander out in the mountains and enjoy sweet confidence."

Or again we see him, always with Traveller, the famous old charger this time "stepping very proudly," as his ride showed those two little sunbonneted daughters of a professor, astride of a plodding old horse, over a pleasant road, quite unknown to them. Once more in imagination we may ride, his companions, through those mountain roads of his dearly loved Virginia, or seek shelter with him, and his daughter from a thundershower in the log cabin, the inmates of which are stunned when too late they realize that the courtly, gracious intruder was no other than the idolized General Lee.

Lee was at the head of Washington College from October, 1865, to October, 1870; a very insufficient time in which to accomplish any considerable work. A man of fast advancing years, he also then had sufficient cause to feel a sense of lassitude. He showed no signs of it. On the contrary, closely studied, those years, and Lee's bearing in them, were in certain respects the most remarkable as well as the most creditable of his life; they impressed unmistakably upon it the stamp of true greatness. Unable to pass them wholly over, I shall deal very briefly with them. His own means of subsistence having been swept away by war,—the property of his wife as well as his own having been sequestered and confiscated in utter disregard not only of law, but—I add it regretfully—of decency,—a mere pittance, designated in courtesy "salary," under his prudent management was made to suffice for the needs of an establishment the quiet dignity of which even exceeded its severe simplicity. Within five months of the downfall of the Confederacy, he addressed himself to his new vocation.

Coming to it from crushing defeat, about him there was nothing suggestive of disappointment; and thereafter through public trials and private misfortunes—for it pleased Heaven to try him with afflictions—he bore himself with serene patience, and a mingled firmness and sweetness of temper to which mere words fail to do justice. More than that, becoming interested in his new work, he evinced, it would seem, as the head of a college a grasp of educational problems not less clear and intelligent than he had previously shown of strategic conditions. It was indeed extraordinary that a man educated in a military school, first an engineer, then an officer of cavalry, and finally a general in charge of large field operations, should, when approaching his sixtieth year, have given proof of such mental activity and freshness.

The most marked feature of his educational career was, however, the moral influence he exerted on the student body—what has most fitly been described by one associated with him as "the mighty influence of his personal character." Here, as in the Army of Northern Virginia, this was all-powerful; so pervasive that in the latter years of Lee's brief administration it is said that "hardly a single case of serious discipline occurred." A Boston student of Washington College in those years—sent there because of the feelings of profound respect for Lee entertained by his Northern father—has since borne witness to me of the personal interest taken by Washington's president in the individual students. In close sympathy with the modern university spirit, the youth in question was, I have reason to suppose, far more addicted to athletics than to his text-books.

"This lack of proficiency in my studies," he has recently written me, "was, of course, a matter for which I was frequently called into the presence of General Lee; and I fully appreciate now, though I did not then, the difficulties under which he labored; for, if he had expelled me, as under similar circumstances he undoubtedly would have expelled any Southern student, it would have been considered a factional matter. He would plead most earnestly with me always that I should attend more to my studies and less to athletics, and never a harsh word during the entire period."

Terrible War Penalty Placed Upon South.

It remains to assign due weight and value to these precepts and this great example at just that juncture and from just that man. And here, bearing in mind the common country—the community to which I belong as well as that I now address—I feel I tread on dangerous ground. What I must necessarily say will very susceptible of misconstruction. Speaking, however, in the true historical spirit, as throughout I have sought to do, I must deal with this topic also as best I can.

Because no blood flowed on the scaffold, and no confiscations of houses or lands marked the close of our War of Secession, it has always been assumed by us of the victorious party that extreme, indeed unprecented, clemency was shown to the vanquished, and that subsequently they had no good ground of complaint or sufficient cause for restiveness.

That history will accord assent to this somewhat self-complacent conviction is open to question. On the contrary, it may not unfairly be doubted whether a people prostrate after civil strife has often received severer measure than was inflicted on the so-called reconstructed Confederate State during the years immediately succeeding the close of strife. Adam Smith somewhere defined Rebels and Heretics as "those unlucky persons who, when things have come to a certain degree of volence, have the misfortune to be of the weaker party." Spoliation and physical suffering have immemorially been their lot. The Confederate, it is true, when he ceased to resist, escaped this visitation in its usual and time-approved form. Nevertheless, he was by no means exempt from it. In the matter of confiscation, it has been computed that the freeing of the slaves by act of war swept out of existence property valued at some two thousand millions; while, over and above this, a system of simultaneous reconstruction subjected the disfranchised master to the rule of the enfranchised bondsman. For a community conspicuously masterful, and notoriously quick to resent affront, to be thus placed by alien force under the civil rule of those of a different and distinctly inferior race, only lately their property, is not physical torment, it is true, but that it is mild or considerate treatment can hardly be contended.

Yet this—slave confiscation, and reconstruction under African rule—was the war penalty imposed on the States of the Confederacy. That the policy inspired at the time a feeling of bitter resentment in the South was no cause for wonder. Upon it time has already recorded a verdict. Following the high precedent set at Appomattox it was distinctly unworthy. Conceived in passion, it ignored both science and the philosophy of statesmanship; worse yet, it was ungenerous. Lee, for instance, again setting the example, applied formally for amnesty and a restoration of civil rights within two months of his surrender. His application was silently ignored; while he died "a prisoner on parole," the suffrage denied him was conferred on his manumitted slaves. Verily, it was not alone the base Indian of the olden time who "threw a pearl away richer than all his tribe"!

Nearer to Lee the Greater Became the Man.

Among the Essays of Emerson is one entitled Character. In the course of that essay, Emerson, without attempting to enter into a definition of character, thus speaks concerning it: "Character denotes habitual self-possession, habitual regard to interior and constitutional motives, a balance not to be overset or easily disturbed by outward events and opinion."

To my knowledge I never saw General Lee; I certainly never stood in his presence, nor exchanged a word with him. On the few occasions when I was a guest in his house, he chanced to be absent. Even that was long ago; while he and his family still lived at Arlington. Thus I know him only by report, and through his letters. But, if the report of those who did know him well, and the evidence of what he wrote, may be relied on, "habitual self-possession, habitual regard to interior and constitutional motives, a balance not to be overset or easily disturbed by outward events and opinion," were his to an eminent degree—a degree which his harshest and most prejudiced critic could not ignore. That, himself a devout man and by conviction sincerely religious, he was neither ashamed nor afraid so publicly to profess himself, may be read in his repeated army orders; or, to such as prefer there to look for it, in his family letters. What more expressive of a profound religious faith could be imagined than these words, written in the very shadow of Gettysburg's disaster to the dying wife of his wounded and captured son: "In his own good time He will relieve us, and make all things work together for our good, if we give Him our love and place in Him our trust."

That his immediate family circle regarded him with the affectionate devotion founded on respect which is the surest indication of those sterling and fundamental qualities which alone can cause a man to seem a hero to those near to him—the confidants of his privacy—appears from those family letters and recollections which have been so freely published. That he impressed himself on those about him in his professional and public life to an uncommon extent—that the soldiers of the Army of Northern Virginia as well as those of his staff and in high command felt not only implicit and unquestioning confidence in him but to him a strong personal affection—is established by their concurrent testimony. He, too, might well have said with Brutus:

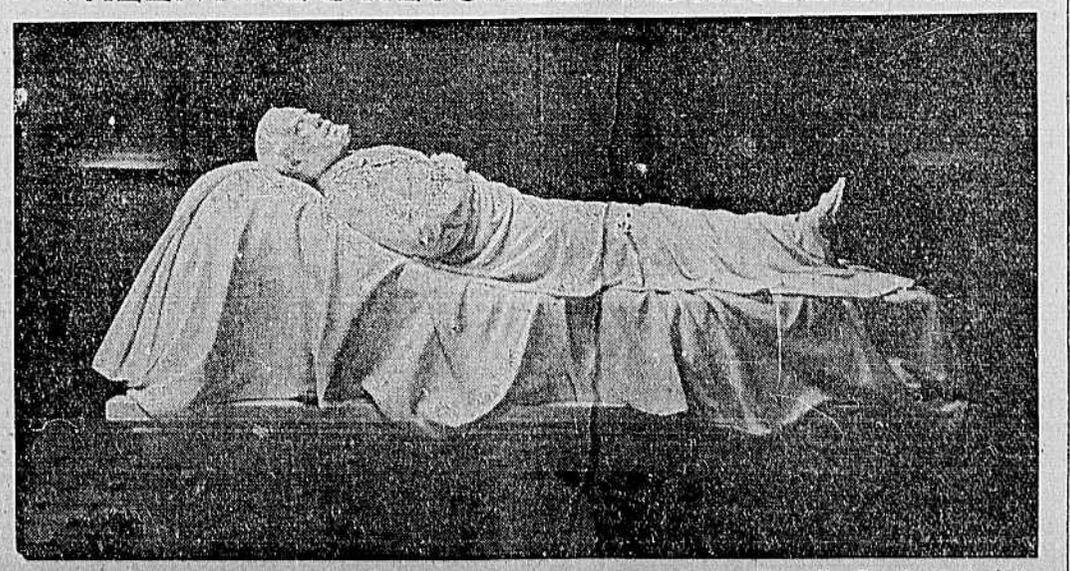
"My heart doth joy that yet in all my life
I found no man but he was true to me.
I shall have glory by this losing day."

Finally, one who knew him well has written of him—"He had the quiet bearing of a powerful yet harmonious nature. An unruffled calm upon his countenance betokened the concentration and control of the whole being within. He was a kingly man whom all men who came into his presence expected to obey." That he was gifted in a prominent degree with the mens aequa in ardius of the Roman poet, none deny.

And now, Virginians, a word with you in closing: "Show me the man you honor; I know by that symptom, better than by any other, what kind of man you yourself are. For you show me then what your ideal of manhood is; what kind of man you long possibly to be, and would thank the gods, with your whole soul, for being if you could. Whom shall we consecrate and set apart as one of our sacred men? Sacred; that all men may see him, be reminded of him, and, by new example added to old perpetual precept, be taught what is real worth in man. Whom do you wish to resemble? Him you set on him column, that all men looking at it may be continually apprised of the duty you expect from them."

"The virtues of a superior man are like the wind; the virtues of a common man are like the grass: the grass, when the wind passes over it, bends."

VALENTINE'S RECUMBENT STATUE OF LEE



This splendid work of art, recognized as one of Valentine's masterpieces, is in the University Chapel at Lexington.